

Article:

Planning Your Army 365 Teams or Communications Site

Organizations should start with determining their intent and outcomes when planning for a team site and a communication site. A team site is a place where the members of a work group or project team can collaborate on project deliverables, plan an event, track status, or exchange ideas. All members are content authors in a team site and can jointly create and edit content. A communication site is used when

an organization wants to broadcast a message, tell a story, share content for viewing to a large audience or the entire organization, or showcase services or people. There is usually a small number of content authors in a communication site and many content readers or consumers

Team Site:

Connect, Collaborate, Create.

Communication Site:

Showcase, Share, Story.

Planning a Team Site

A SharePoint team site connects you and your team to shared content and resources. Use team sites to store and collaborate on files or to create and manage lists of information as well as:

- Track and stay updated on project status
- Organize and co-author shared content
- Connect to a Microsoft 365 group to access team resources

A team site can be created for each discrete group of people or unit of work. While your team site will have one or more Owners, typically every Member of the team has the same privileges in the site. When a new team site is created you will get a team collaboration site template. The team site home page contains various default web parts. Examples of web parts are News section, Quick Links, Site Activity, and Document Library.

The Site Owners can customize the site's look, navigation, web parts, and content to fit the needs of the members. Examples of site customizations are:

- Create a document library where your team can upload resources.
- Edit and customize site navigation.
- Change the look of your SharePoint site by customizing the theme, logo, navigation style, and header and footer layouts.
- Add or remove pages to this site or the site navigation to accommodate existing content.
- Choose to associate this site with a hub site within your organization or add this site to an existing hub site navigation by adding it as a link within the hub site navigation bar.

After you create and launch your site it is important to maintain the site content. Have a plan to keep content and web parts up to date. Some best practices follow¹:

- Establish a schedule to review the site content as often as needed to ensure content is still accurate and relevant.
- Keep links and web parts updated to ensure you are leveraging the full value of your site.
- View site usage by using the built-in usage data report to get information on popular content, site visits, and more.
- Once you've created a site in SharePoint, periodically review your site settings and make any required changes to site information and permissions.

Communication Site



SharePoint communication sites are designed to inform and engage. Unlike a Team site, where the primary goal is to collaborate to create content with a small group, the primary goal of a communication site is to inform readers - primarily for them to read, not create. Communication sites are designed for broad communication and provide a great way to:

- Share information with many people or your entire organization
- Showcase the services your section or group offers or tell a story about a new product to the organization
- Share news in a visually compelling format

Your communication site tells a story for your readers. Your story will primarily be told with pages, but you may have other resources in your site as well, including lists and document libraries. Things to keep in mind as you plan your site's content:

- Minimize the time (not clicks) it takes for readers to get to the content they need
- Build communication sites with more pages than documents to make it easy to consume
- Create your home page last even if you plan this page first. This way, when you create navigation elements on your home page, such as web parts, you can automatically pull in the image from each page to create visual consistency when the reader clicks a link.
- For every page, including the home page, make sure that you are providing the viewer with the following information: where am I, what can I do here, and where can I go next?
- Use lists on your site to dynamically display content in a table-like format. Use document libraries to store and display content such as documents and files.
- When planning your pages avoid overloading them with too much information.
- Ensure pages are accessible and adhere to Section 508 requirements. Make sure images have "alt" text, when a screen reader encounters an image, it will attempt to read a text alternative.
- Finally, you will need to plan permissions for your site. Permissions are managed by SharePoint groups and, by default, include three permission levels²: Owners – full control permissions, Members – edit permissions, Visitors – read permissions.

Put the Two Cs to work in your favor

To reiterate the most important planning considerations when considering a team and communication site remember these points. With a Teams site, one *collaborates* with members of a project or organizational team. Whereas, a communication site, such as SharePoint Online,

one *communicates* with a broad group of people or the entire organization. In other words, if the purpose is an interactive exchange – talk, messages, texts -- choose Teams; if the purpose is to post information, a communication site is the ticket. To start the process of creating a team or communication site, one will need to contact their Major Command Level Administrator (MCLA) at the following email, army365-mcla-tradoc@army.mil.

This TRADOC OCKO publication was written by Nathan Truckenbrod. Want to learn more? You can respond to this article or access related articles, blogs, media presentations, and more at <https://www.milsuite.mil/book/groups/tradoc-km>.

Disclaimer: The views and opinions expressed are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of the Office of the Chief Knowledge Officer, the Department of the Army, or the United States government.

Notes:

1. Microsoft, "Team Site vs. Communication Site: Which one should I choose?" June 27, 2022, <https://learn.microsoft.com/en-us/microsoft-365/community/team-site-or-communication-site>.
2. Microsoft, "Plan Your SharePoint Communication Site," accessed September 6, 2022, <https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/office/plan-your-sharepoint-communication-site-35d9adfe-d5cc-462f-a63a-bae7f2529182>.

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Contact the TRADOC OCKO for support, development, and training: dashboards, collaboration sites, SharePoint, metrics, KPIs, process mapping, Microsoft Teams, SMS, multimedia production, and much more.

